

Michigan Agriculture News



FROM STATE SENATOR

Wayne Kuipers

Serving the 30th District

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Dear Friend of Agriculture:

In step with the onset of a new growing season, the start of 2004 brings a new legislative year to Lansing. As your State Senator, I will continue working to preserve and support Michigan agriculture, most assuredly working to protect critical agricultural programs in the state budget. I welcome hearing from you as we consider the needs and challenges of the farming community. For more information on these topics, or on any other legislative issue, please contact my office toll-free at 877-KUIPERS or by e-mail at senwkuipers@senate.mi.gov. Best wishes for a productive and prosperous year!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Wayne Kuipers".

Wayne Kuipers
State Senator
30th District



Sen. Wayne Kuipers listens to Don Lawrence, a Michigan Department of Agriculture fruit and vegetable inspector, as the first shipment of Michigan apples gets ready to head to Mexican markets. He was joined by Dan Wyant, director of the Michigan Department of Agriculture, and other officials.

Animal Health

West Nile Virus, bovine spongiform encephalopathy, avian flu - new threats to animal health seem to surface

almost daily. In addition to stepped-up feed inspections and testing efforts, Michigan has developed several programs to help farmers manage animal diseases and support quick response efforts if necessary.

- ✓ Michigan's Electronic ID System for Livestock uses technology to identify individual animals and expedite tracking of livestock from farm to market. The program began as a pilot project in Northeast Michigan in 2002 as part of the state's bovine TB eradication plan and now serves as a national tracking model. ID tags are available to producers at no charge in the TB endemic area or to those statewide with accredited herds. More detailed information is available at www.michigan.gov/mda.
- ✓ A new state web site, www.michigan.gov/emergingdiseases, centralizes information on zoonotic diseases such as bovine TB and West Nile Virus. This comprehensive database also covers other animal and plant diseases and includes links to federal sites.
- ✓ The newly inaugurated "Vet Net" program aims to increase Michigan's preparedness for animal health emergencies among the state's 3,600 licensed veterinarians. Visit www.michigan.gov/emergingdiseases and click on Quick Links to the Vet Net article for further information.





State Senator

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Senator Kuipers Upcoming Fertilizer Legislation

Senator Kuipers will be introducing a bill in the near future which will establish state-wide guidelines for the use of fertilizer. The guidelines will be developed by the Department of Agriculture in consultation with the Department of Environmental Quality. Currently, many townships and cities have local regulations on the use of fertilizer which can differ greatly. Additionally, this legislation will eliminate the requirement for guaranteed analysis for custom blended fertilizer and allows the use of decimals to the 1/10th of a percent for custom blends to more accurately reflect the plant nutrients in a particular custom fertilizer blend.

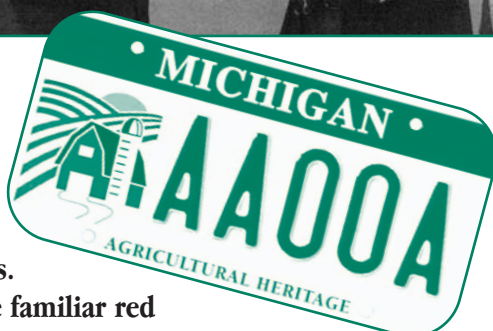
Kuipers Honored for Commitment to Agriculture

As appreciation for continued support of Michigan's agricultural industry, the Michigan Agri-Business Association (MABA) recently honored Senator Wayne Kuipers with the title as "Agricultural Advocate" and awarded him a John Deere Narrow Front Model "G" model tractor. Members of the MABA Board presented the collectible tractors and talked with legislators about key issues in March 2004.



License Plates Support Agriculture

Friends of agriculture have provided much needed support for K-12 agriculture programs by buying Agricultural Heritage specialty license plates. Since the program began in 2001, over 7,000 of the familiar red silo emblazoned plates have been sold, raising nearly \$120,000. The specialty plate is available by mail or fax, or at any Secretary of State branch office. The original fee is \$35 in addition to the annual registration fee. Twenty-five dollars of this cost supports agricultural education. Purchasing information is available at the Secretary of State web site www.michigan.gov/sos. Type in the keyword - License Plate Store.



Bovine TB News

Michigan cattle producers and state regulators remain vigilant in efforts to eradicate bovine TB with the late February announcement that a Barry County bull preliminarily tested positive for the disease. Tests confirm that the TB strain did not originate in Michigan, meaning the disease hasn't spread from northeast Michigan. For that reason, the discovery is not expected to impact the split-state status request Michigan submitted to the USDA in 2002. Producers and state officials are still awaiting that federal decision. It is believed the infected bull came from Canada to a Michigan livestock auction market in 2002.

Receive E-Legislative Updates

If you would like to receive periodic legislative updates via email, please send a short note to senwkuipers@senate.mi.gov. Electronic mail is an inexpensive and convenient method to transmit information to interested citizens.

